UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council expresses hope Croatia will re-examine decision not to accept renewal of UNPROFOR mandate; says Force's presence in Republic is vital to regional peace and security.

+ Secretary-General extends condolences to Government and people of Japan on death and destruction caused by earthquake yesterday; says United Nations will respond to any request for assistance.

+ Secretary-General has meetings with German Foreign Minister and Minister for Economic Coordination and Development in Bonn.

+ United Nations launches consolidated appeal for $710 million for Rwanda; UNDP to convene Conference seeking another $764 million on behalf of Rwandan Government.

+ Secretary-General appoints General Bernard Janvier of France to succeed General Bertrand de la Presle as Force Commander of UNPROFOR on 1 March.

+ WHO Executive Board begins ninety-fifth session in Geneva; Director-General envisages renewed health-for-all policy based on equity and solidarity.

+ Developed and developing countries must promote awareness of Convention to Combat Desertification, Algeria tells Negotiating Committee.

+ Chairman and Special Rapporteur present reports to Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

+ UNDP-supported Human Rights Commissioner named Russian Federation's Man of the Year for 1994.

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The Security Council today expressed the hope that discussions in the coming weeks would lead to a re-examination of Croatia's decision not to

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accept a renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) beyond 31 March. In a statement read out by its President, Emilio J. Cardenas (Argentina), the Council expressed particular concern about the wider implications of that decision for the peace process throughout the former Yugoslavia.

The Council said UNPROFOR's continued presence in Croatia was of vital importance for regional peace and security. The United Nations, in general, and UNPROFOR, in particular, had a positive role to play in implementing the peace-keeping plan for Croatia and bringing about a settlement which fully respected its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Council said it understood Croatia's concerns about the lack of implementation of major provisions of the plan, and would not accept the status quo becoming indefinite.

The Council went on to call on all parties and others concerned to avoid any action or statement which might increase tension. It urged the parties to accelerate implementation of the Economic Agreement of 2 December and encouraged the international community to provide adequate financial support. It called for intensified efforts to consolidate that achievement and bring about a political settlement in Croatia, and called on the parties to negotiate in earnest to that end.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed shock and sadness at the devastation and appalling loss of life caused by the earthquake which struck Japan yesterday. He extended his condolences and sympathy to the Japanese Government and people, and to the families of the victims. He stressed that the United Nations would respond to any request for assistance in dealing with the disaster.

General Assembly President Amara Essy (Côte d'Ivoire) also extended his sympathy to the people and Government of Japan. He asked Member States to provide whatever assistance might be requested by the Government.

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The Secretary-General arrived in Germany today, having concluded his official visit to Denmark. He had meetings in Bonn with Germany's Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, and Minister for Economic Coordination and Development, Carl-Dieter Spranger.

Before leaving Copenhagen, Mr. Boutros-Ghali visited the Bella Centre -- the venue for the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development -- and met with the Secretary-General of the NGO Forum and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Some 10,000 ngos will be accredited to the Summit, and more than 1,000 related meetings and events have been scheduled.

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The United Nations today appealed for $710 million to support emergency relief and first-stage recovery efforts in Rwanda, and continued humanitarian assistance to Rwandan refugees in neighbouring countries. The consolidated inter-agency appeal was launched in Geneva by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Peter Hansen.

Tomorrow, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will convene a Round Table Conference seeking $764 million for the Rwandan Government's programme of national reconciliation, rehabilitation and socio-economic development. The two-day Conference will be attended by representatives of donor countries, international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and United Nations agencies.

Special Representative Shahryar Khan was in Geneva for the two fund-raising drives. He said that Rwanda's economy had been totally devastated by last year's civil strife, and that the country needed a complete programme of reconstruction and rehabilitation.

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The Secretary-General has decided to appoint General Bernard Janvier of France as Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) as of 1 March. General Janvier will succeed General Bertrand de Sauville de la Presle, who will complete his assignment and return to the service of his Government. The Secretary-General expressed his appreciation and admiration for General de la Presle's excellent performance and wise leadership as Force Commander.

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The Executive Board of the World Health Organization (WHO) has begun its ninety-fifth session in Geneva. The Executive Board will be discussing the reforms needed to bring the Organization into the twenty-first century. In his introduction to the 1996-1997 proposed programme budget, WHO Director-General Hiroshi Nakajima stated that the Board was expected to adopt a renewed health-for-all policy based on equity and solidarity.

The Executive Board consists of 31 persons technically qualified in the field of health, chosen by the World Health Assembly on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. It gives effect to the decisions and policies of the Health Assembly, advising it and generally facilitating its work.

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All countries have a responsibility to promote awareness about the new international instrument to combat desertification and drought, according to Algeria. The Algerian representative made that comment to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of a Convention to Combat Desertification, as it continued its sixth session yesterday.

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Bolivia said priority should be given to Africa in efforts to promote awareness of the Convention, but other regions should not be overlooked. Ghana told the Committee that the awareness creation efforts should stress how the solutions to desertification would be made available to local communities. France, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said the local community had a special role to play in the process of awareness building. While the secretariat should be a facilitator in disseminating information about the Convention, it should not take over the role of local communities.

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The Chairman of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Ivanka Corti, has called for the introduction of the right of petition, through a new optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. She said that measure would be the best contribution the Committee could make to the forthcoming Fourth World Conference on Women. Those comments were made yesterday, as the Committee discussed the Chairman's report on her intersessional activities during the biennium 1993-1994.

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Radhika Coomaraswamy, also presented a report to the Committee. She said she had been mandated by the Commission on Human Rights to recommend ways of eliminating violence against women, and to work with other special rapporteurs in the human rights area, as well as to consult with the Committee. Twenty-nine countries had replied to requests for information on violence in the family, the community, and by the State, and for information on programmes related to violence against women. Many non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies had also responded.

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The Russian Federation's Commissioner for Human Rights, Sergei Kovalev, has been named "Man of the Year for 1994" in that country. He received the honour following a public opinion survey conducted throughout the Russian Federation.

Mr. Kovalev's Office receives support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). That support is part of a larger regional programme to strengthen democracy, governance and participation in central and eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

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